

Subjects and Predicates

Sentences consist of two basic parts: subjects and predicates.

1b. The **subject** tells *whom* or *what* the sentence is about.

EXAMPLE In English class **the highlight of the day** was the discussion of Davy Crockett.

1d. The **predicate** of a sentence tells something about the subject.

EXAMPLE The class **read several tall tales about this adventurous frontiersman.**

EXERCISE A Decide whether the underlined word or word group is the subject or the predicate. Write *S* if the word or word group is the subject or *P* if it is the predicate.

Examples P 1. Across America, Davy Crockett is a popular legendary hero.

S 2. This native of Tennessee died at the battle of the Alamo.

_____ 1. Whether young or old, many people enjoy legends about Davy Crockett.

_____ 2. In one story, a wild stallion carries Davy on his back for three days.

_____ 3. Did you ever hear the story about Davy's conversation with a raccoon?

_____ 4. Most of the remarkable stories about Crockett are obviously not true.

_____ 5. Still, the legendary Davy Crockett continues to capture our imaginations.

EXERCISE B In each sentence below, draw one line under the complete subject and two lines under the complete predicate.

Example 1. When did the first explorer reach the South Pole?

6. Roald Amundsen led the first successful expedition to the South Pole in 1911.

7. The well-seasoned Amundsen was nearly forty years old at the time.

8. Much earlier in life, Amundsen had planned for a career in medicine.

9. By age twenty-five, the adventurous young man had changed his goal to a life at sea.

10. Who first reached the North Pole?

11. United States explorer Robert E. Peary claimed to be the first.

12. Another U.S. explorer, Frederick Cook, made the same claim.

13. Peary's claim was accepted by Congress.

14. The American admiral Richard Byrd made the first flight over the South Pole in 1929.

15. Byrd had made the first flight over the North Pole in 1926 with Floyd Bennett.

Simple and Complete Subjects

1c. The **simple subject** is the main word or word group that tells *whom* or *what* the sentence is about.

The **complete subject** consists of all the words that tell *whom* or *what* a sentence is about.

SIMPLE SUBJECT This **book** on ecology will provide information for my report.

COMPLETE SUBJECT **This book on ecology** will provide information for my report.

Sometimes the simple subject and the complete subject are the same.

EXERCISE A Decide whether the underlined word or word group is the complete subject or the simple subject. Write CS for *complete subject* or SS for *simple subject*.

Example CS 1. The study of wildlife is fascinating and fun.

- _____ 1. This particular course concentrates on endangered species.
- _____ 2. A large variety of plants and animals are endangered.
- _____ 3. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides information on endangered animals.
- _____ 4. Some animals are threatened by a change in their surroundings.
- _____ 5. Considered the greatest threat to animals are the activities of human beings.

EXERCISE B Underline the complete subject in the following sentences. Then, circle the simple subject.

Example 1. The carnivorous Tasmanian devil grows up to thirty-one inches in length.

6. One fascinating nocturnal animal is the aardvark.
7. That strange name always makes me laugh.
8. Another animal with a strange name is the platypus.
9. One of the biggest moths in the world was named for Hercules, a mythological hero.
10. The ant lion captures ants and other insects in its sand traps.
11. The armadillo lives as far north as Texas and as far south as Argentina.
12. Some armadillos may be up to five feet long.
13. The wingspan of the American crow can reach up to three feet.
14. An intelligent bird, the crow can sometimes learn simple words and phrases.
15. Like the parrot, the crow mimics phrases of human speech.

Simple and Complete Predicates

- 1e.** The **simple predicate**, or **verb**, is the main word or word group that tells something about the subject.

The **complete predicate** consists of a verb and all the words that modify the verb and complete its meaning.

SIMPLE PREDICATE Aidan **goes** to the movies every weekend.

COMPLETE PREDICATE Aidan **goes to the movies every weekend**.

EXERCISE A Decide whether the underlined word or word group is the complete predicate or the verb (simple predicate). Above each, write *CP* for *complete predicate* or *V* for *verb*.

Examples 1. ^{*CP*} One hundred years ago, families entertained themselves. ^{*CP*}

2. They ^{*V*} would have been astonished by television.

1. Motion-picture cameras and projectors were invented in the mid-1890s.
2. The first projected movie was shown in Paris in 1895.
3. Thomas Edison helped develop the movie projector.
4. At first, movies must have amazed people.
5. For many years, moviegoers watched newsreels at movie theaters.

EXERCISE B In each of the following sentences, draw one line under the complete predicate, and then circle the verb.

Example 1. Will the temperature reach seventy degrees before breakfast?

6. Our trip took us through misty mountains and shady, green forests.
7. Dairy cows were grazing on the lower slopes of the hills.
8. We arrived at our destination before late afternoon.
9. The whole family was looking forward to a pleasant vacation.
10. Have you ever breathed air as pure as country air?
11. We planned as many outdoor activities as possible.
12. My personal favorite was the daily canoe trip upriver.
13. My older brother had never canoed before.
14. Did he catch fish from the stream for breakfast?
15. My sister caught several trout.

Verb Phrases

Some simple predicates, or verbs, consist of more than one word. Such verbs are called **verb phrases** (verbs that include one or more helping verbs).

EXAMPLES I **will be using** the computer for the next hour.

What **does** this error message **mean**?

Have you **contacted** the technical service center?

EXERCISE A Underline the verb phrase in each sentence.

Example 1. Trish didn't have an e-mail account until today.

1. I had used a computer only a few times before this school year.
2. My classmates and I will soon be computer experts.
3. Shouldn't every student have experience with the latest technology?
4. We have been using the computer for research assignments.
5. For example, yesterday I was researching Mark Twain.
6. I had not yet read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
7. I was surfing the Internet in the computer lab.
8. I had quickly found a complete copy of the book on the Internet.
9. Since then, I have read as much of the story as possible.
10. Can you believe my good fortune?

EXERCISE B In each sentence below, the underlined word group contains a word or part of a word that is not part of the verb phrase. Circle this word or word part.

Example 1. Dylan hasn't checked his e-mail today.

11. Please don't forget my e-mail address.
12. Every day during the holidays, I will check my messages.
13. I have always enjoyed your friendly notes.
14. We will probably exchange e-mails all summer long.
15. Isn't technology becoming part of everyone's social life?

Complete and Simple Subjects and Predicates

1c. The **simple subject** is the main word or word group that tells *whom* or *what* the sentence is about.

The **complete subject** consists of all the words that tell *whom* or *what* a sentence is about.

SIMPLE SUBJECT The **study** of small insects is a hobby of mine.

COMPLETE SUBJECT The **study of small insects** is a hobby of mine.

1e. The **simple predicate**, or **verb**, is the main word or word group that tells something about the subject.

The **complete predicate** consists of a verb and all the words that modify the verb and complete its meaning.

SIMPLE PREDICATE (VERB) Many people **will listen** with interest to facts about bugs.

COMPLETE PREDICATE Many people **will listen with interest to facts about bugs.**

EXERCISE A Underline each complete subject once and each complete predicate twice.

Example 1. Are any of your friends allergic to the dust mite?

1. The microscopic dust mite was discovered less than three decades ago.
2. This eight-legged pest is related to the tick and the spider.
3. Do you ever wash your pillow in very hot water?
4. Someone in your household should probably do so as soon as possible.
5. The daily diet of the dust mite consists of tiny skin flakes on your pillow and sheets.
6. The creatures leave tiny waste droppings in your bed.
7. These microscopic droppings mix with dust in your bedroom and in the house.
8. Unfortunately, this tainted dust may cause an allergic reaction in you or a family member.
9. Can a concerned person remove these pesky flesh-eaters from bedding?
10. Any person with laundry skills can wash bedding in the hottest wash cycle possible.

EXERCISE B Underline each simple subject once and each simple predicate (verb) twice.

Example 1. The tiny bedbug has often found its home in humans' beds.

11. The body of the bedbug is flat and wingless.
12. This bloodthirsty bug belongs to the insect class.
13. The blood of mammals such as humans forms the bedbug's diet.
14. A bedbug may grow to a length of a quarter of an inch.
15. The little insect usually sucks the blood of its host at night.

Compound Subjects

- 1f.** A **compound subject** consists of two or more subjects that are joined by a conjunction and that have the same verb.

EXAMPLE Numerous **trees** and **bushes** respond to seasonal weather changes.

EXERCISE A Underline the compound subject in each sentence.

Example 1. The live oak and the Douglas fir remain green year-round.

1. Live oaks and white oaks should not be confused with one another.
2. The redwood and the sequoia are found in California.
3. Douglas firs and other trees of the pine family appeal to Christmas tree shoppers.
4. Most conifers and many broad-leaved plants are evergreen.
5. Does the cypress or the magnolia bear cones?
6. Maples and elms are deciduous trees.
7. In the autumn these and other deciduous trees lose their leaves.
8. Do the reds and golds of autumn trees appeal to your sense of beauty?
9. During the fall my best friend and I always gather colorful leaves.
10. These fragile, beautiful leaves and our original poems make special cards for friends.

EXERCISE B Add a compound subject to each of the following predicates. Use *and* or *or* to join the parts of your compound subjects.

Example 1. Posters of my favorite singers and photos of my family decorate the walls of my room at home.

11. Tucked away in my school bag are _____
12. Either _____ will be voted Funniest Student of the Year.
13. Will _____ be at your party on Saturday?
14. _____ came bounding out of the murky darkness straight toward me.
15. In the school cafeteria today, _____ are the two main dishes.

Compound Verbs

- 1g.** A **compound verb** consists of two or more verbs that are joined by a conjunction and that have the same subject.

EXAMPLE Which mammal **has** wings and **can fly** like a bird?

EXERCISE A Underline each compound verb or verb phrase.

Example 1. Can a mammal move as fast as a car and rise as high as an airplane?

1. Some bats can fly sixty miles per hour and can also soar to a height of ten thousand feet.
2. Some species of bats fly much more slowly and cannot reach the same heights as others do.
3. In all, more than nine hundred species of bats exist and find habitats worldwide.
4. Bats are the world's only flying mammals and may have wingspans of over five feet.
5. The flying fox, a fruit bat, hangs in trees and can have a wingspread more than five feet across.
6. The bumblebee bat has a five-inch wingspan and weighs less than a dime.
7. All mammals, including bats and humans, grow fur or hair and nurse their young.
8. Honduran white bats grow long white fur and eat only fruit.
9. The vampire bat drinks cows' blood but seldom consumes human blood.
10. This bat bites its prey and then hungrily laps blood from the wound.

EXERCISE B Add a compound verb to complete each of the following sentences. Use *and*, *or*, or *but* to join the parts of your compound verb.

Example 1. Can bats fly and roost in the darkness of the cave?

11. In the backyard, my puppy _____.
12. _____ Keisha _____ during lunch period?
13. Every so often, I _____.
14. We _____ at the track after school.
15. _____ the seventh graders _____?
16. Birds and squirrels _____ with each other at the bird feeder.
17. The runners _____ before they went to the starting line.
18. _____ you and Suzi _____ before dinner?
19. Each student _____ a paper on a topic of his or her choice.
20. The ball _____ toward the end zone.